

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

- 1. (Previously presented)** An easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica,
wherein the precipitated silica has a BET specific surface area of at least 220 m²/g, and
wherein when ion-exchange water is added to the easily dispersible cake to provide an aqueous dispersion of the silica with a concentration of 5% by weight, said dispersion being stirred with a propeller mixer to affect a preliminary dispersion, a resultant slurry being treated to be dispersed with a high-pressure homogenizer once at a processing pressure of 78 MPa, and further being diluted to reduce the silica concentration to 1.5% by weight, a resultant dispersion has a light-scattering index (n-value) of at least 2.
- 2. (Previously presented)** The easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica according to Claim 1, having a water content within a range of 83-93% by weight.
- 3. (Currently amended)** A process for producing the easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica according to Claim 1, comprising using a liquid selected from the group consisting of aqueous alkali silicate solution, alkaline aqueous solution of which pH is adjusted with a basic substance, and water as an initial reaction liquid, ~~wherein said process comprises simultaneously adding an alkali silicate and a mineral acid to a reaction liquid of which pH is being maintained at a fixed value, variation width being ± 0.3 , within a range of 7.5-11.5, and of which temperature is being maintained at not lower than 90-98°C, whereby forming precipitated silica through their reaction, wherein a concentration of silica solid in a reaction mixture at an ending time of the reaction is not higher than 50 g/L;~~ and separating said precipitated silica from said reaction liquid in wet state.
- 4. (Cancelled)**
- 5. (Previously presented)** A dispersion of precipitated silica comprising a dispersion of the easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica according to Claim 1 in a polar solvent, wherein an

average particle size of precipitated silica particles present in the dispersion is not greater than 300 nm, and a ratio of aggregated particles having a particle size equal to or more than 500 nm is not higher than 5% by volume.

6. (Previously presented) The dispersion of precipitated silica according to Claim 5, further comprising a cationic polymer.

7. (Previously presented) A process for preparing the dispersion of precipitated silica according to Claim 5, comprising subjecting a silica slurry, formed by dispersing the cake of precipitated silica in the polar solvent, to a fine pulverization treatment with a high-pressure homogenizer.

8. (Previously presented) A process for preparing the dispersion of precipitated silica according to Claim 6, comprising subjecting a liquid premixture, formed by dispersing the cake of precipitated silica and the cationic polymer in the polar solvent, to a fine pulverization treatment with a high-pressure homogenizer.

9. (Previously presented) A coating liquid for an ink-jet recording sheet, which is obtained by dispersing the easily dispersible cake of precipitate silica according to Claim 1 and a binder in a polar solvent,

wherein a percent transmission of the coating liquid, as measured after diluting the same to the silica concentration of 1.5% by weight, is at least 20%.

10. (Previously presented) The coating liquid for the ink-jet recording sheet according to Claim 9, further comprising a cationic polymer.

11. (Previously presented) A process for making the coating liquid for the ink-jet recording sheet according to Claim 9, comprising dispersing the cake of precipitated silica and the binder in the polar solvent.

12. (Previously presented) A process for making the coating liquid for the ink-jet recording sheet according to Claim 10, comprising dispersing the cake of precipitated silica, the cationic polymer and the binder in the polar solvent.